

BOX PATENT
APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Attorney Docket No: KRIN112403

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Seattle, Washington 98101

January 5, 2000

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

Transmitted herewith for filing under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b) by Express Mail is the complete patent application of: Lynn P. Krinsky, entitled METHOD OF PREPARING CUSTOMIZED WALLPAPER PANELS, executed on January 4, 2000.

- X 1. An application consisting of 9 pages of specification and claims and 3 sheets of informal drawings is attached.
- X 2. A newly executed Declaration and Power of Attorney is attached.
- X 3. A filing date in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 is requested. The Express Mail Certificate appears below.
- X 4. A Small Entity Statement is attached.

COMPUTATION OF FEE

	Number Filed		Number Extra		Rate		Basic Fee 345.00
Total Claims	16 - 20	=	0	x	9.00	=	0.00
Independent Claims	2 - 3	=	0	x	39.00	=	0.00
Multiple Dependent Claims	-0-		---		130.00		
TOTAL							345.00

- X 5. Our check No. 112490 in the amount of \$345.00 to cover the total fee as computed above is enclosed.

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- X 6. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16, 1.17 and 1.18 which may be required during the entire pendency of the application, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 03-1740. This authorization also hereby includes a request for any extensions of time of the appropriate length required upon the filing of any reply during the entire prosecution of this application. A copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Please address all further correspondence to:

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Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR
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Registration No. 43,746
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EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

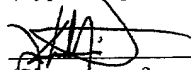
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Applicant: Lynn Paula Krinsky

Attorney Docket No. KRIN112403

Serial No.: Not yet assigned

Filed: Concurrently herewith

Title: METHOD OF PREPARING CUSTOMIZED WALLPAPER PANELS

**VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION) CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS
(37 C.F.R. §§ 1.9(F) AND 1.27(B)) - INDEPENDENT INVENTOR**

As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that I qualify as an independent inventor as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.9(c) for purposes of paying reduced fees under 35 U.S.C. §§ 41(a) and (b), to the Patent and Trademark Office with regard to the invention entitled METHOD OF PREPARING CUSTOMIZED WALLPAPER PANELS described in

- (X) the specification filed herewith.
- () Application No. _____, filed _____.
- () Patent No. _____, issued _____.

I have not assigned, granted, conveyed or licensed and am under no obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey or license, any rights in the invention to any person who could not be classified as an independent inventor under 37 C.F.R. § 1.9(c) if that person had made the invention, or to any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 C.F.R. § 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 C.F.R. § 1.9(e).

Each person, concern or organization to which I have assigned, granted, conveyed, or licensed or am under an obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey, or license any rights in the invention is listed below:

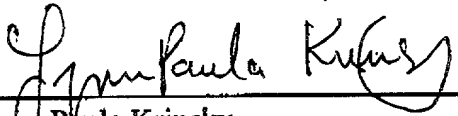
- (X) no such person, concern, or organization.
- () persons, concerns or organizations listed below.

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 C.F.R. § 1.28(b)).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that

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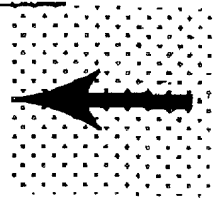
these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.


Lynn Paula Krinsky

Date

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METHOD OF PREPARING CUSTOMIZED WALLPAPER PANELS

Field of the Invention

The invention relates to customized wallpaper, and methods for allowing customers to select a particular wallpaper design from a displayed selection, and to
5 customize the design by adding personalized information. The method requires the use of a digital image of the basic design that is to be customized.

Background of the Invention

Among the variety of ways of decorating walls in both dwellings and commercial enterprises is the use of wall coverings, particularly wallpaper. The term "wallpaper"
10 generally refers to rolls of sheets of a substrate onto which is printed a repeating pattern. The substrate is not limited to paper, but can be any other type of sheet onto which print can be applied, and that will adhere to a wall surface, such as vinyl sheeting.

While wallpaper sometimes provides a better aesthetic appearance than paint, wallpaper decorations are necessarily limited by the repeating patterns that are required to
15 allow alignment of similarly patterned sheets of wallpaper side by side on a wall. This requirement that the wallpaper have a repeating pattern limits artistic expression and frequently reduces aesthetic appeal. In certain situations, it may be preferable to have a mural that does not have a repeating pattern, instead of wallpaper. However, mural paintings are prepared by skilled artists so that they are expensive.

There is yet a need for a type of wallpaper that does not have a repeating pattern, and that can be adapted for use on walls of different sizes. Desirably, the wallpaper
20 should also allow a purchaser to customize the designs further by adding personal detailed touches, such as images of family members, and the like. It is further desirable that the customer should be able to select the wallpaper from a display, request custom
25 modification, and receive the specially prepared wallpaper within a short space of time.

Summary of the Invention

The invention provides customized wallpaper panels, that can be sold on rolls, for use as wall decoration.

In one embodiment, the invention is of a method of providing customized wallpaper, not having a repeating pattern, that includes creating a digital image of the basic design. Thereafter, copies of the basic design are displayed on a medium suitable for customer selection, such as a book or a video display unit. The customer may then select a basic design, and provide design-customizing information that is personal to the customer, such as color scheme, the addition of images of family members, animals, landscapes, or any other modification. Upon receiving the wallpaper design-customizing information, the digital image of the design is modified to include this customer-provided information to thereby produce a customized digital image of the design. The customized digital image is then converted to a visual image, and printed onto a suitable substrate for use as a decorative wallpaper. The wallpaper may comprise several rolls of sheets. Notwithstanding, when the sheets are properly aligned, and adhered to the wall side by side in proper sequence, a complete design or scene is produced as in a mural painting, without need for the repeating pattern that is typical of prior art wallpaper.

In another embodiment, a vendor of customized wallpaper in displays copies of basic designs comprised of contiguous decorative panels of the wallpaper, in a medium such as a book or video display unit, to customers for review and selection of designs. The customer then selects a wallpaper design, or a subdesign of the selected design. A subdesign is a contiguous portion of the design, and not the entire displayed design. The customer is then permitted to further customize the subdesign or design by adding design features personally to the customer. The vendor relays the customer design selection, customization information, and subdesign details (if any) to a source for customizing an existing digital image of the design. The digital image is then customized by incorporating customizing features into the design or subdesign. The customized design or subdesign is then converted to a visual image that is printed onto a suitable substrate for the wallpaper.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The foregoing aspects and many of the attendant advantages of this invention will become more readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a schematic representation of an embodiment of the decorative wallpaper panels of the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a schematic flow diagram of steps of an embodiment of a method in accordance with the invention;

FIGURE 3A is a perspective view of an open book showing a schematic of customizable wallpaper panels for customer selection; and

FIGURE 3B is a schematic diagram of a video display unit, displaying decorative wall panels in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

The invention provides customizable decorative wall panels, comprised of a thin sheet of paper, vinyl or other like substrate, which provides a coherent design not having a repeating pattern, when the sheets or panels of wallpaper are aligned side by side in the correct order. The decorative image or design may comprise, for example, a landscape, a cityscape, a still life, an abstract or any other design that is aesthetically pleasing or required for a particular purpose. Importantly, although the wallpaper does not include a repeating pattern that must be matched in side-by-side adhered sheets, as in prior art wallpapers, this does not preclude the invention's repetitive use of certain images, for example, images of a particular word, or a particular image. A commercial establishment may, for example, wish to intersperse its trademark at various points in the scene depicted in the wallpaper. However, the placement of these words or images, although they may be in a repetitive sequence, do not constitute the type of repetitive pattern that is necessary in prior art wallpapers to enable alignment of the papers to produce a coherent design on a wall.

In the specification and claims, a "digital image" refers to the type of image electronically stored by a computer, whether it be in random access memory, on a hard disk, or in any other storage medium known to be used by computers. The term "design" when referring to the wallpaper of the invention, refers to a decoration that does not have a repeating pattern, which characterizes prior art wallpaper. The wall paper may encompass any design, in much the same way that painted murals depict a wide variety of subject matter. The term "features personal to the customer" means those features that the customer selects either from an array of options presented by the party customizing the wallpaper for the customer, or that the customer provides on its own accord, to suit its own particular purposes. These features may include modifications to the basic designs shown (for example, modifying a scene to include additional persons; modifying the appearance of persons in the basic design; adding images of other people; modifying background scenery; modifying size and shape of certain objects in the design; modifying the color scheme; and countless other details of personal choice that may be applied to artwork for personal aesthetic satisfaction). In the specification and claims, the term "visual image" is used to distinguish from a "digital image." The term "visual image" refers to the decorative design that is ultimately printed onto the customized wallpaper panels of the invention, and not to the digitized binary image in the computer or computer readable memory. In the specification and claims, the term "panels" do not

refer to solid or hard panels such as wooden panels. Instead, the term "panels" refers to each of the separate strips of wallpaper that are necessary to complete a visual image in accordance with the invention, for example, the six panels shown in FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 1 represents an embodiment of the invention. It depicts a series of six
5 contiguous panels arranged in a particular order. The panels have an overall height (H) and each panel has an overall width (L). Typically, it is anticipated that H will be approximately 10 ft., to reach from the top to the bottom of a standard 10 ft. wall. Of course, as explained below, H may be any height, depending upon the height of the wall that a customer wants to cover. The width L of each panel is typically approximately
10 4 ft. However, narrower or wider panels may also be produced depending upon both customer needs and the available widths in which substrate is supplied.

As indicated, each of the panels has an upper section 10 (about 2' high), a middle section 20, and a lower section 30 (about 2' high). In accordance with the invention, a coherent visual image with a non-repeating pattern covers all six panels, and each of the
15 upper, middle and lower sections of these panels to provide a complete picture. Notwithstanding, in accordance with the invention, a customer may select not to use the upper section 10 of each of the panels. The decorative visual image produced by middle section 20 and lower section 30 of each of the panels, when they are arranged in proper order, will yet produce a coherent and visually pleasing image. Similarly, the customer
20 may elect not to use the lower portion 30 of each of the panels. In this circumstance, the upper sections 10 and middle sections 20 of the panels, when arranged in proper sequence, yet produces a coherent and visually pleasing image. Finally, a customer may elect to use only certain contiguous ones of the panels. For example, a customer may elect to use only panels 1-4 or 3-6. Under this circumstance, the contiguous panels
25 selected, whether full panels, or lacking upper or lower sections, yet produce a coherent and visually pleasing image, when arranged in proper sequence.

From the above explanation, it is apparent that a customer presented with display copies of basic designs in accordance with the invention would have a variety of options to customize the size and design of the wallpaper. When less than the full basic design
30 displayed is selected, this design may be referred to as a "subdesign." Thus, for example, if a customer were to select only panels 1-4, then this reduced-size design would be a "subdesign" of the full design of FIGURE 1 that requires six panels. Likewise, if the customer were to select all six panels, but lacking the upper sections 10 or the lower sections 30, then this would also be referred to as a subdesign. Since the basic designs are digitized, a selected subdesign may be "blown up" to full size when a visual image is
35 crated for printing onto wallpaper substrates.

In accordance with the invention, initial basic designs are selected. These visual images do not have repeating patterns that are typical of prior art wallpaper, as explained

above. Rather, they are more like murals, except that they are customizable. Referring to FIGURE 2, a flow chart of the method in accordance with the invention, the initially selected basic designs are digitized 40. Samples of the digitized basic designs may be printed as visual designs on papers, books, or boards or may be displayed at a Web site or a video display unit or in some other medium to enable potential customers to review the designs. The designs would be presented in visual format, with panels similar to the embodiment shown in FIGURE 1. A customer may then make a selection from the display designs 60. During customer selection, as explained above, the customer may select customizing details ("features personal to the customer"). An order for the specific design of wallpaper along with customizing information is then transmitted to a source for producing the wallpaper 70. At the source, the digital image is customized 80 to customer's satisfaction. If necessary, visual images of the customized digital image may be printed on a smaller format paper for customer review before printing the wallpaper.

The customized wallpaper may be printed with any of a variety of existing technologies. One example of such technology is "raster image processing". In using this technique, the digital image is downloaded to a raster image processor which creates a mirror image of a visual design corresponding to the modified digital image on a substrate. The mirror image of the visual design is then transferred onto a suitable wallpaper substrate by heat lamination. A protective coating may optionally be applied over the printed design.

In an alternative printing method, printing includes modifying the digital image into a visual image, printing a reverse image of the visual image onto transfer paper, heat laminating the transfer paper image to a wallpaper substrate, applying a wet-transfer process to the combined transfer paper and wallpaper substrate sandwich; and finally removing the transfer paper and excess toner from the wallpaper substrate to produce a wallpaper with the printed customized image.

In a further alternative method, the customized design may be printed with an ink-jet printer directly onto the wallpaper substrate. The latter method is not preferred because the image produced is presently not as sharply defined as may be achieved with other printing techniques.

While the preferred embodiment of the invention has been illustrated and described, it will be appreciated that various changes can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method of providing customized wallpaper, the method comprising:
 - (a) creating digital images of basic designs for imprinting onto wallpaper;
 - (b) displaying copies of the basic designs on a medium suitable for customer viewing;
 - (c) receiving wallpaper design-customizing information from a customer, the information comprising at least one basic design selected from the copies, color scheme selected, and features personal to the customer to be added to the at least one selected basic design;
 - (d) modifying the digital image of the at least one selected basic design to include the customizing information and produce a customized design; and
 - (e) printing the customized design onto a suitable medium for decorative use.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the creating comprises authoring a basic design and storing a digital image of the design in computer-readable format.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the displaying of copies of the basic designs comprises displaying on paper.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the displaying of copies of basic designs comprises displaying on a video display unit, the unit in electronic communication with a computer-readable memory containing stored digital images of the designs.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the receiving of customizing information comprises receiving the information by electronic mail.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the printing comprises:
 - (a) downloading the digital image onto a raster image processor;
 - (b) creating a mirror image of a visual design corresponding to the modified digital image on a substrate; and
 - (c) transferring the visual design onto a wallpaper substrate by heat lamination.
7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising after printing applying a protective coating over the customized design.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of printing comprises transforming the modified digital image into a visual image, printing a reverse image of the visual image onto transfer paper, heat laminating the transfer paper image to a wallpaper substrate, applying a wet-transfer process to the combined transfer paper and wallpaper substrate, and removing the transfer paper and excess toner from the wallpaper substrate to produce a wallpaper with design printed thereon.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the printing of the customized design comprises printing with an ink-jet printer directly onto a wallpaper substrate.

10. A method of providing customized wallpaper, the method comprising:

(a) displaying copies of basic designs of wallpaper, comprised of contiguous decorated panels, for customer review and selection of the designs, the designs not having repeating patterns, selectable portions of the designs providing coherent subdesigns, the selectable portions comprising less than all the contiguous panels comprising the designs;

(b) permitting customers to customize selected wallpaper designs, the permitting comprising: permitting selection of a subdesign of a selected design, permitting inclusion of personal design features specified by the customer into the selected subdesign, and permitting selection of a color scheme;

(c) relaying customer selection and customization information to a source for customizing an existing digital image of the basic design, the customizing comprising incorporating selection and customization features into the digital image to produce a customized design; and

(d) providing wallpaper having the customized design printed thereon.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of displaying comprises displaying the designs on paper.

12. The method of Claim 10, wherein the displaying comprises displaying on a video display unit, the unit in electronic communication with a machine-readable memory containing stored digital images of the displayed designs.

13. The method of Claim 10, wherein the relaying of customer information comprises relaying by electronic mail.

14. The method of Claim 10, wherein the permitting of customers to customize comprises permitting a customer to select a personal feature including a personal image.

15. The method of Claim 10, wherein the permitting of customers to customize comprises permitting selection of only a central contiguous portion of a design, excluding end portions of the design.

16. The method of Claim 10, wherein the permitting of customers to customize designs comprises permitting customers to select a contiguous portion of the design, including at least one of end section of the design.

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METHOD OF PREPARING CUSTOMIZED WALLPAPER PANELS

Abstract of the Disclosure

Methods for customizing wallpaper designs that do not include repeating patterns, typical of prior art wallpaper. The method includes making a digital image of a basic design, and displaying visual versions of the designs for customer selection and customization. Customization of the designs includes adding personalized details specified by the customer, selection of color scheme, and a wide variety of other variables that are required to meet customer requirements. The digital image is modified to include the customer-specified information, and a customized digital image is produced. A visual design of the customized digital image is then printed onto a suitable substrate.

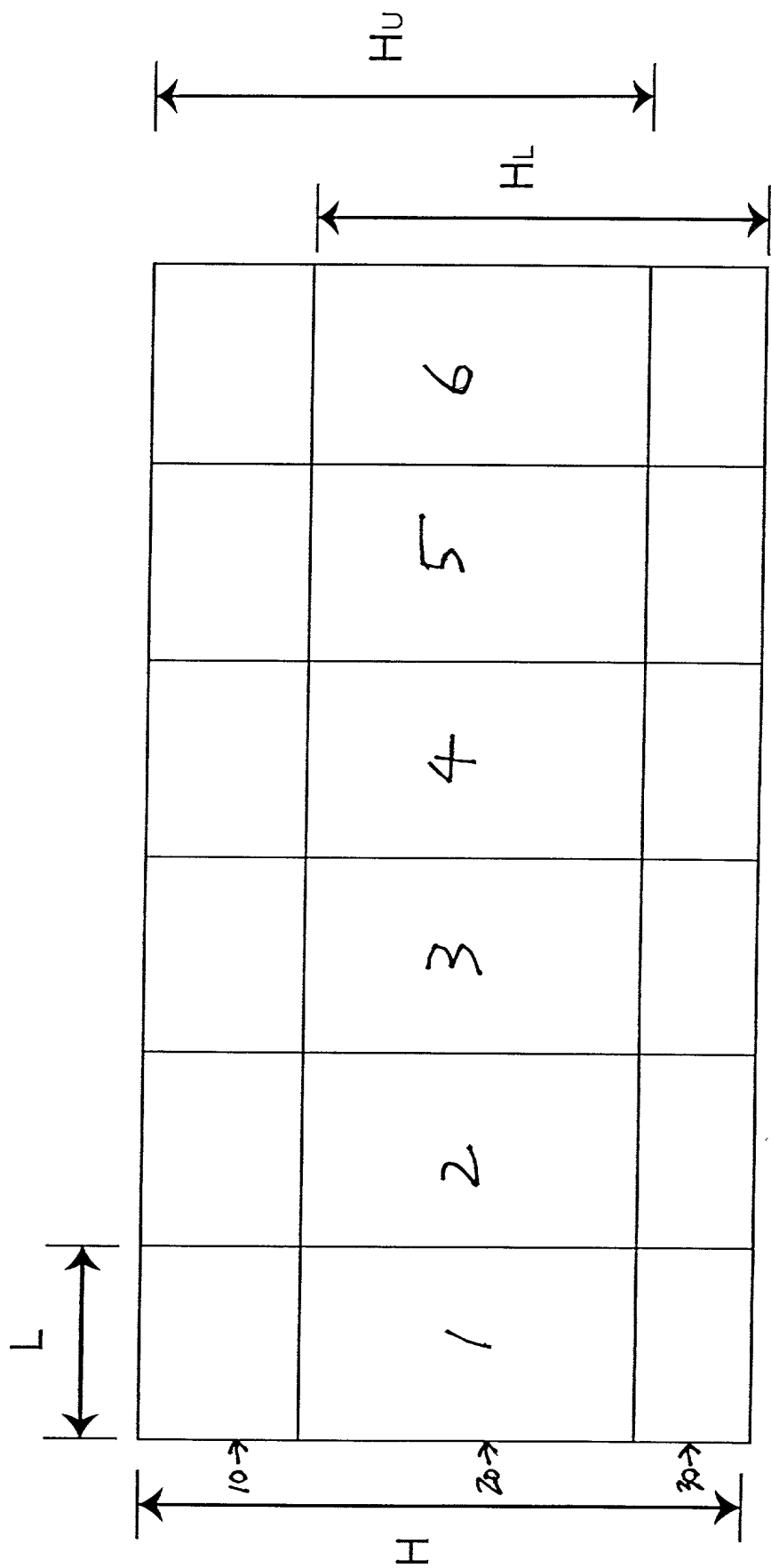


Figure 1

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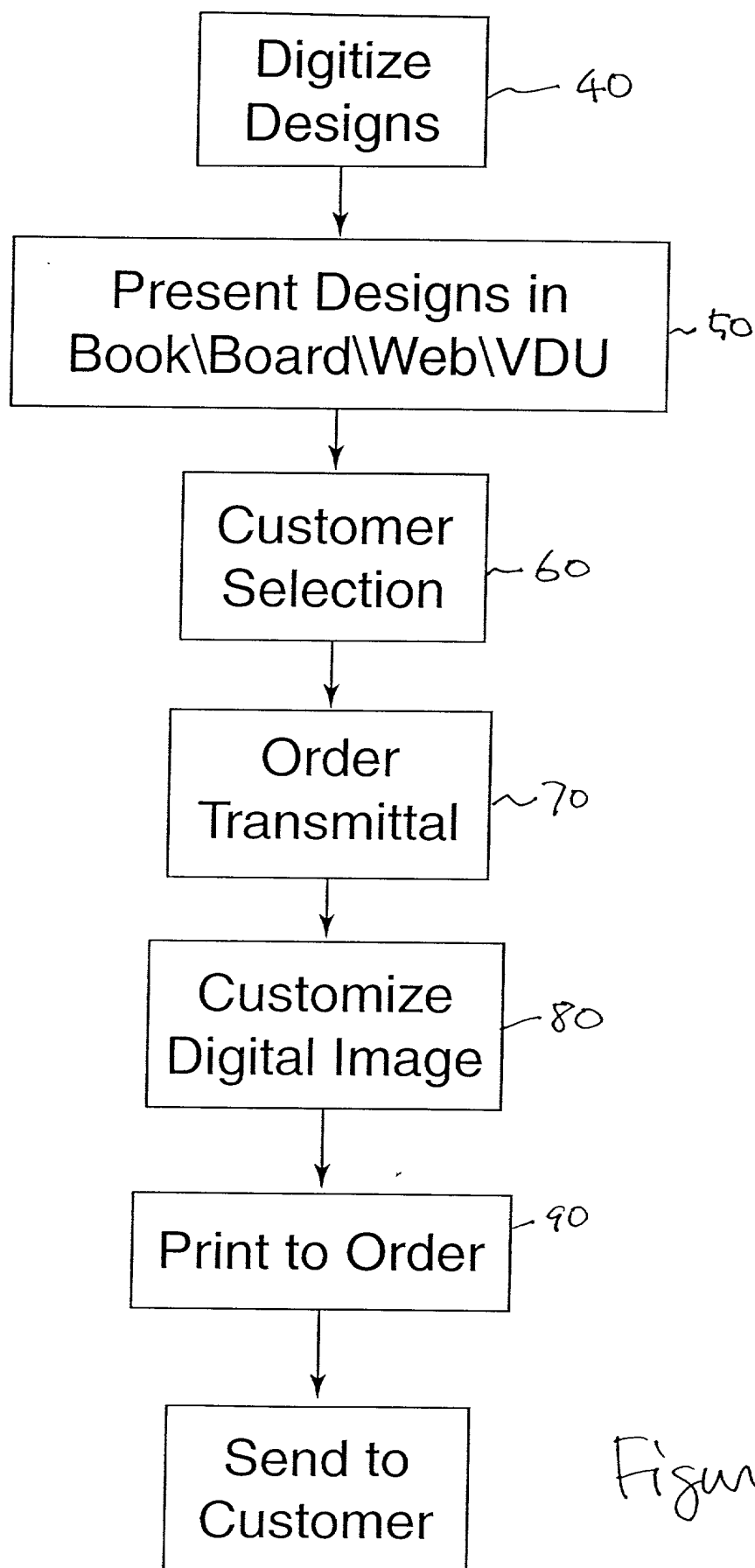


Figure 2

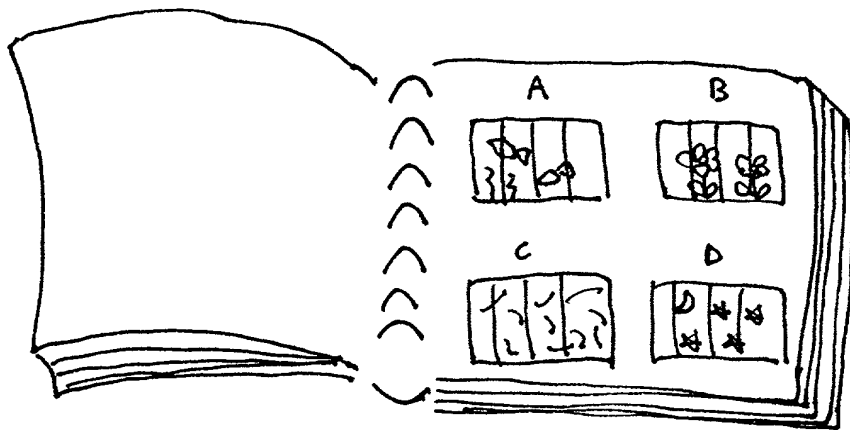


Figure 3A

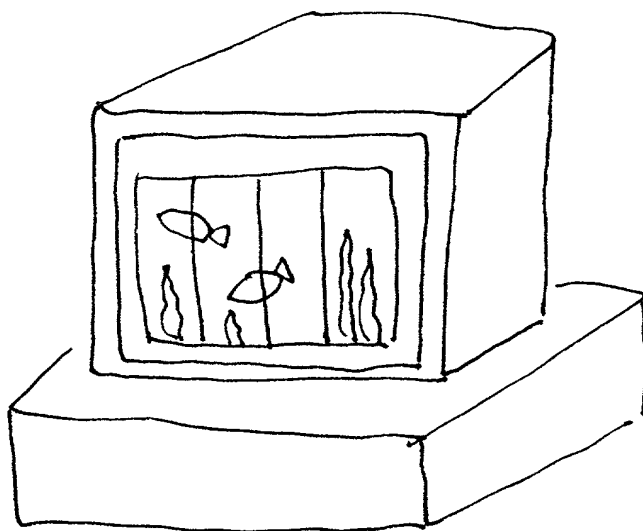


Figure 3B

**COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
IN PATENT APPLICATION**

As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:

my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor of the subject matter that is claimed and for which patent is sought on the invention entitled: METHOD OF PREPARING CUSTOMIZED WALLPAPER PANELS, the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(c) of any foreign application(s) for patent listed below and have also identified below, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed: NONE.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(d) of any inventor's certificate listed below. I declare that, upon investigation, I am satisfied that to the best of my knowledge, when filing the application for the inventor's certificate I had the option to file an application for either a patent or an inventor's certificate as to the subject matter of the identified claim or claims forming the basis for the claim of priority. NONE.

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below: NONE.

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) or PCT international application(s) designating the United States listed below, and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application: NONE.

I hereby appoint the following attorneys and/or agents to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: Bruce E. O'Connor, Reg. No. 24,849; Lee E. Johnson, Reg. No. 22,946; Gary S. Kindness, Reg. No. 22,178; James W. Anable, Reg. No. 26,827; James R. Uhler, Reg.

No. 25,096; Jerald E. Nagae, Reg. No. 29,418; Dennis K. Shelton, Reg. No. 26,997; Jeffrey M. Sakoi, Reg. No. 32,059; Ward Brown, Reg. No. 28,400; Robert J. Carlson, Reg. No. 35,472; Marcia S. Kelbon, Reg. No. 34,358; Rodney C. Tullett, Reg. No. 34,034; Daiva K. Tautvydas, Reg. No. 36,077; and the firm of Christensen O'Connor Johnson & Kindness^{PLLC}. Address all telephone calls to Shoko I. Leek at telephone No. 206.695.1780.

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I hereby further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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